### OTHELLO Close Reading Practice: Act III, Scene 3 & 4

**III.3.103-155**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IAGO</th>
<th>My noble lord—</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OTHELLO</td>
<td>What dost thou say, Iago?</td>
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<tr>
<td>IAGO</td>
<td>Did Michael Cassio, when you woo’d my lady, Know of your love?</td>
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<tr>
<td>OTHELLO</td>
<td>He did, from first to last: why dost thou ask?</td>
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<td>IAGO</td>
<td>But for a satisfaction of my thought; No further harm.</td>
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<tr>
<td>OTHELLO</td>
<td>Why of thy thought, Iago?</td>
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<td>IAGO</td>
<td>I did not think he had been acquainted with her.</td>
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<td>OTHELLO</td>
<td>O, yes; and went between us very oft.</td>
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<td>IAGO</td>
<td>Indeed!</td>
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<tr>
<td>OTHELLO</td>
<td>Indeed! ay, indeed: discern’st thou aught in that? Is he not honest?</td>
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<tr>
<td>IAGO</td>
<td>Honest, my lord!</td>
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<tr>
<td>OTHELLO</td>
<td>Honest! ay, honest.</td>
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<tr>
<td>IAGO</td>
<td>My lord, for aught I know.</td>
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<tr>
<td>OTHELLO</td>
<td>What dost thou think?</td>
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<tr>
<td>IAGO</td>
<td>Think, my lord!</td>
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<tr>
<td>OTHELLO</td>
<td>Think, my lord! By heaven, he echoes me, As if there were some monster in his thought Too hideous to be shown. Thou dost mean something: I heard thee say even now, thou likedst not that, When Cassio left my wife: what didst not like? And when I told thee he was of my counsel In my whole course of wooing, thou criedst 'Indeed!' And didst contract and purse thy brow together, As if thou then hadst shut up in thy brain Some horrible conceit: if thou dost love me, Show me thy thought.</td>
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<tr>
<td>IAGO</td>
<td>My lord, you know I love you.</td>
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<tr>
<td>OTHELLO</td>
<td>Think thou dost; And, for I know thou’rt full of love and honesty, And weigh’st thy words before thou givest them breath, Therefore these stops of thine fright me the more: For such things in a false disloyal knave Are tricks of custom, but in a man that’s just They are close delusions, working from the heart That passion cannot rule.</td>
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<tr>
<td>IAGO</td>
<td>For Michael Cassio, I dare be sworn I think that he is honest.</td>
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<td>OTHELLO</td>
<td>I think so too.</td>
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<tr>
<td>IAGO</td>
<td>Men should be what they seem; Or those that be not, would they might seem none!</td>
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<tr>
<td>OTHELLO</td>
<td>Certain, men should be what they seem.</td>
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<tr>
<td>IAGO</td>
<td>Why, then, I think Cassio’s an honest man.</td>
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<tr>
<td>OTHELLO</td>
<td>Nay, yet there’s more in this: I prithee, speak to me as to thy thinkings, As thou dost ruminate, and give thy worst of thoughts The worst of words.</td>
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</table>

Here, Iago pretends to hesitate to say what is on his mind. What effect does this have on Othello?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IAGO</th>
<th>O, beware, my lord, of jealousy:</th>
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<tr>
<td>OTHELLO</td>
<td>It is the green-eyed monster which doth mock The meat it feeds on; that cuckold lives in bliss Who, certain of his fate, loves not his wronger; But, O, what damned minutes tells he o’er Who dotes, yet doubts, suspects, yet strongly loves!</td>
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<tr>
<td>OTHELLO</td>
<td>O misery!</td>
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<tr>
<td>IAGO</td>
<td>Poor and content is rich and rich enough, But riches fainless is as poor as winter To him that ever fears he shall be poor. Good heaven, the souls of all my tribe defend From jealousy!</td>
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<tr>
<td>OTHELLO</td>
<td>Why, why is this?</td>
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</table>

Note Iago’s introduction of the words “jealousy”, “cuckold”, and “monster” here. Look them up in the dictionary if you need to. What is each word likely to make Othello think of?

jealousy — monster — cuckold —

**Here, Iago “hesitates” again. What is effect of this hesitation?**

**Circle all the times Iago repeats Othello’s words here. Which words does he repeat?**

**What effect does this have on Othello?**

**What word does Iago repeat again in the next several lines? What is Iago implying here about Cassio?**
Think'st thou I'd make a lie of jealousy,
To follow still the changes of the moon
With fresh suspicions? No; to be once in doubt
Is once to be resolved: exchange me for a goat,
When I shall turn the business of my soul
To such exsufflicate and blown surmises,
Matching thy inference. 'Tis not to make me jealous
To say my wife is fair, feeds well, loves company,
Is free of speech, sings, plays and dances well;
Where virtue is, these are more virtuous:
Nor from mine own weak merits will I draw
The smallest fear or doubt of her revolt;
For she had eyes, and chose me. No, Iago;
I'll see before I doubt; when I doubt, prove;
And on the proof, there is no more but this,—
Away at once with love or jealousy!

IAGO   I am glad of it; for now I shall have reason
To show the love and duty that I bear you
With franker spirit: therefore, as I am bound,
Receive it from me. I speak not yet of proof.
Look to your wife; observe her well with Cassio;
Wear your eye thus, not jealous nor secure:
I would not have your free and noble nature,
Out of self-bounty, be abused; look to:
I know our country disposition well;
In Venice they do let heaven see the pranks
They dare not show their husbands; their best conscience
Is not to leave't undone, but keep't unknown.

OTHELLO  Dost thou say so?
IAGO  She did deceive her father, marrying you;
And when she seem'd to shake and fear your looks,
She loved them most.

OTHELLO  And so she did.
IAGO  Why, go to then;
She that, so young, could give out such a seeming,
To seal her father's eyes up close as oak-
He thought 'twas witchcraft—but I am much to blame;
I humbly do beseech you of your pardon
For too much loving you.

OTHELLO  I am bound to thee for ever.
IAGO  I see this hath a little dash'd your spirits.

OTHELLO  Not a jot, not a jot.
IAGO  I' faith, I fear it has.
I hope you will consider what is spoke
Comes from my love. But I do see you're moved:
I am to pray you not to strain my speech
To grosser issues nor to larger reach
Than to suspicion.

OTHELLO  I will not.
IAGO  Should you do so, my lord,
My speech should fall into such vile success
As my thoughts aim not at. Cassio's my worthy friend--
My lord, I see you're moved.

OTHELLO  No, not much moved:
I do not think but Desdemona's honest.
IAGO  Long live she so! and long live you to think so!

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IAGO  Why, how now, general! no more of that.

OTHELLO  Avant! be gone! thou hast set me on the rack:
I swear 'tis better to be much abused
Than but to know't a little.

IAGO  How now, my lord!

Paraphrase Othello's words here (i.e., Why is he "on the rack"):

_________________________________________________________
**OTHELLO**  What sense had I of her stol’n hours of lust?
I saw’t not, thought it not, it harm’d not me;
I slept the next night well, was free and merry;
I found not Cassio’s kisses on her lips:
He that is robb’d, not wanting what is stol’n,
Let him not know’t, and he’s not robb’d at all.

**IAGO**  I am sorry to hear this.

**OTHELLO**  I had been happy, if the general camp,
Pioners and all, had tasted her sweet body,
So I had nothing known. O, now, for ever
Farewell the tranquil mind! farewell content!
Farewell the plumed troop, and the big wars,
That make ambition virtue! O, farewell!
Farewell the neighing steed, and the shrill trump,
The spirit-stirring drum, the ear-piercing fife,
The royal banner, and all quality,
Pride, pomp and circumstance of glorious war!
And, O you mortal engines, whose rude throats
The immortal Jove’s dead clamours counterfeit,
Farewell! Othello’s occupation’s gone!

**IAGO**  Is’t possible, my lord?

**OTHELLO**  Villain, be sure thou prove my love a whore,
Be sure of it; give me the ocular proof:
Or by the worth of man’s eternal soul,
Thou hadst been better have been born a dog
Than answer my waked wrath!

**IAGO**  Is’t come to this?

**OTHELLO**  Make me to see’t; or, at the least, so prove it,
That the probation bear no hinge nor loop
To hang a doubt on; or woe upon thy life!

**IAGO**  My noble lord,--

**OTHELLO**  If thou dost slander her and torture me,
Never pray more; abandon all remorse;
On horror’s head horrors accumulate;
Do deeds to make heaven weep, all earth amazed;
For nothing canst thou to damnation add
Greater than that.

**IAGO**  O grace! O heaven forgive me!
Are you a man? have you a soul or sense?
God be wi’ you; take mine office. O wretched fool.
That livest to make thine honesty a vice!
O monstrous world! Take note, take note, O world,
To be direct and honest is not safe.
I thank you for this profit; and from hence
I’ll love no friend, sith love breeds such offence.

**OTHELLO**  Nay, stay: thou shouldst be honest.

**IAGO**  I should be wise, for honesty’s a fool
And loseth that it works for.

**OTHELLO**  By the world,
I think my wife be honest and think she is not;
I think that thou art just and think thou art not.
I’ll have some proof. Her name, that was as fresh
As Dian’s visage, is now begrimed and black
As mine own face. If there be cords, or knives,
Poison, or fire, or suffocating streams,
I’ll not endure it. Would I were satisfied!

**IAGO**  I see, sir, you are eaten up with passion:
I do repent me that I put it to you.
You would be satisfied?

**OTHELLO**  Would! nay, I will.

**IAGO**  And may: but, how? how satisfied, my lord?
Would you, the supervisor, grossly gape on--
Behold her topp’d?

**OTHELLO**  Death and damnation! O!

**IAGO**  It were a tedious difficulty, I think,
To bring them to that prospect: damn them then,
If ever mortal eyes do see them bolster
More than their own! What then? how then?

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**Why is he suffering now compared to before?**
Othello claims here that he would have been happy if...

**What does Othello say farewell to in these lines?**
What does Othello demand that Iago do now?

**What is Iago “offended” here?**

**What effect does this have on Othello?**

**What did Othello used to think of Desdemona? and what does he think of her now? Use two different colors and/or different symbols to show PAST and PRESENT.**

**What does Othello mean here by “satisfied”?**

**What hypothetical situation does Iago present here? How is this effective?**
What shall I say? Where's satisfaction?
It is impossible you should see this,
Were they as prime as goats, as hot as monkeys,
As salt as wolves in pride, and foals as gross
As ignorance made drunk. But yet, I say,
If imputation and strong circumstances,
Which lead directly to the door of truth,
Will give you satisfaction, you may have't.

**OTHELLO**  Give me a living reason she's disloyal.
**IAGO**  I do not like the office:
But, sith I am enter'd in this cause so far,
Prick'd to't by foolish honesty and love,
I will go on. I lay with Cassio lately;
And, being troubled with a raging tooth,
I could not sleep.
There are a kind of men so loose of soul,
That in their sleeps will mutter their affairs:
One of this kind is Cassio:
In sleep I heard him say 'Sweet Desdemona,
Let us be wary, let us hide our loves,'
And then, sir, would he gripe and wring my hand,
Cry 'O sweet creature!' and then kiss me hard,
As if he pluck'd up kisses by the roots
That grew upon my lips: then laid his leg
Over my thigh, and sigh'd, and kiss'd; and then
Cried 'Cursed fate that gave thee to the Moor!'

**OTHELLO**  O monstrous! monstrous!
**IAGO**  Nay, this was but his dream.
**OTHELLO**  But this denoted a foregone conclusion:
'Tis a shrewd doubt, though it be but a dream.
**IAGO**  And this may help to thicken other proofs
That do demonstrate thinly.

**OTHELLO**  I'll tear her all to pieces.
**IAGO**  Nay, but be wise: yet we see nothing done;
She may be honest yet. Tell me but this,
Have you not sometimes seen a handkerchief
Spotted with strawberries in your wife's hand?
**OTHELLO**  I gave her such a one; 'twas my first gift.
**IAGO**  I know not that; but such a handkerchief--
I am sure it was your wife's--did I to-day
See Cassio wipe his beard with.

**OTHELLO**  If it be that--
**IAGO**  If it be that, or any that was hers,
It speaks against her with the other proofs.
**OTHELLO**  O, that the slave had forty thousand lives!
One is too poor, too weak for my revenge.
Now do I see 'tis true. Look here, Iago;
All my fond love thus do I blow to heaven.
'Tis gone.
Arise, black vengeance, from thy hollow cell!
Yield up, O love, thy crown and hearted throne
To tyrannous hate! Swell, bosom, with thy fraught,
For 'tis of aspisc's tongues!
**IAGO**  Yet be content.
**OTHELLO**  O, blood, blood, blood!
**IAGO**  Patience, I say; your mind perhaps may change.
**OTHELLO**  Never, Iago: Like to the Pontic sea,
Whose icy current and compulsive course
Ne'er feels retiring ebb, but keeps due on
To the Propontic and the Hellespont,
Even so my bloody thoughts, with violent pace,
Shall ne'er look back, ne'er ebb to humble love,
Till that a capable and wide revenge
Swallow them up. Now, by yond marble heaven,  [Kneels]
In the due reverence of a sacred vow
I here engage my words.